

GREAT SINGERS SERIES

in co-operation with

C B C RADIO

presents

PROGRAM III

LOIS MARSHALL, MEZZO-SOPRANO

GRETA KRAUS, piano

MACMILLAN THEATRE

SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 1981

8 P.M.

PROGRAM NOTES

Hugo Wolf was born in Austria in 1860, the son of a furrier who was also a keen musical amateur. Wolf proved impatient and rebellious as a student, for he left school without graduating, and was expelled from the Vienna Conservatory for having made sarcastic remarks to the director. He had little success thereafter as private teacher or conductor, and survived only with financial assistance from friends and his family. An early altercation with an unappreciative Brahms led Wolf into the pro-Wagner camp, in his capacity as music critic of the Vienna Salonblatt (1884-1887). Wolf's composition appears to have been much influenced by an unstable mental condition, which meant frenzied short periods of productivity and longer periods of acute depression and relative inactivity. His work was devoted primarily to miniatures, particularly the Lied (art song); he however completed an opera (Der Corregidor), a symphonic poem, the Italian Serenade, a string quartet and other instrumental works. In 1897 it was necessary to hospitalize Wolf on account of mental illness; after a short treatment he was released but later had to return to hospital where he died on February 22, 1903.

His songs combine chromatic harmony, melody shaped by the inflexion and rhythm of dramatic declamation, close interplay of melody and accompaniment, and the transformation and expansion of a few short and formative motives. The songs frequently feature aspects of word painting, and are models of concision and concentration. His work reflects a continuing evolution of the great German Lieder tradition of Schumann, influenced by the harmonic colour of Wagner.

During 1889 and 1890, Wolf set 10 sacred and 34 secular poems from the Spanisches Liederbuch (Spanish Songbook), Geibel and Heyse's 1852 German translations of representative sixteenth and seventeenth century Spanish poetry. In his settings, Wolf reflects a

Spanish flavour through use of guitar and mandolin effects and dance-like rhythms. When Wolf wrote these songs he was hosted by friends at Perchtoldsdorf and nearby Vienna. He arranged a publication contract with Schott, whereby he retained copyright, determined printing format, and could discourage subsequent editions in transposed keys.

Then in 1890, Wolf turned to Paul Heyse's German translations of Italian "Rispetti" and "Velote" as contained in the Italienisches Liederbuch, whose only Italian musical association appears to be the occasional suggestion of a lute-accompanimental figure; the lack of Italian flavour apparently displeased Heyse. The settings were composed in two highly creative periods (1890-91, 1896) connected by a disturbing depression when Wolf lacked inspiration. The collection was finished during his return to Perchtoldsdorf shortly after the completion of his opera. Despite such intervals, there is a remarkable continuity of style. The song texts concern various aspects of human life: unrequited love, vengeance, confidences, lovers' tiffs, mockery, and even nuptial hymns.

Wolf set many poems by Joseph Karl Benedikt von Eichendorff, the Prussian Romantic poet. Wolf's choice of Der Musikant (1886) ("The Musician") may well have been intended as a musical self-portrait. He turned for song collections to other German Romantics, from the most famous, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, to Julius Sturm and Eduard Mörike. What more appropriate conclusion to a concert could there be than the satirical Abschied (Farewell) which Wolf delighted in playing, to the amusement of friends in lengthy soirées?

- notes by Barry Waterlow

PROGRAM

Sacred Songs from the Spanisches Liederbuch

Nun bin ich dein, du aller Blumen Blume

Now I am thine, flower of all flowers. Here at thy shrine, I dedicate my soul. Thou holy one, may my spirit, rejected by men, be always protected by thee. Heavenly star, may thy beams heal all my sorrows. Be beside me at death, and guide me to heaven's bright shore.

Nun wandre, Maria, nun wandre nur fort

(Joseph sings:) Let us keep on, Mary. Already the cock is crowing and the little town is near. Let us keep on, my love, my treasure, and soon we shall be in Bethlehem. There you will find sweet rest and sleep. I see your strength fading, dear wife; oh, I can hardly bear to see your pain. Take courage: we will surely find shelter there. If your hour of pain were already over, Mary, I would reward the bringer of such good news. This little ass here I would gladly give him.

Die ihr schwebet um diese Palmen

You angels, hovering around the palm trees in the night wind: hush the rustling leaves; my child is sleeping. Palms of Bethlehem, how can you sway so angrily in the wind? Be still, and lean gently, quietly down. The Son of Heaven has such grief to bear. How weary he is of the sorrowing world. But now this pain is eased in quiet sleep. Cold winds blow. With what can I cover my child's limbs? Oh, angels, soaring on the wind, hush the rustling leaves; my child is sleeping.

Führ' mich, Kind, nach Bethlehem

Lead me, child, to Bethlehem. I long to see my God and Saviour. Let me not fall asleep on the way; guard my footsteps, rescue me from the temptations that have waylaid me; let me worship thee!

Ach, des Knaben Augen sind mir

Oh, this boy's eyes are so clear and lovely, and they have a strange radiance that wins my heart. If with those eyes he should look into mine, and see his image there, would he then smile on me? I would give my soul to follow and serve those eyes.

Mühevoll komm' ich und belaven

I am bowed down with grief. Lord, see my tears; enfold me in thine arms, wash away my sin, restore my spirit. Repentant, I kneel to wash thy feet. Bestow grace, as on her who dried thy feet with her hair. At thy crucifixion, thou spoke the forgiving phrase: "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." Even so, Lord, protect and guide me.

Ach, wie lang die Seele schlummert

Oh, how long, my soul, wilt thou sleep? Be vigilant unto death. The day of grace is near. Hear the angel choir, inspiring love. Hear also the cries of the infant Saviour. Awake!

Herr, was trägt der Boden hier

Lord, what will this soil bear watered by thy bitter tears? "Thorns, dear heart, for me, and flowers for you." Oh, can a garden thrive, where such streams are flowing? "Yes, do you see? There they will twine crowns and garlands, of such different kinds."

INTERMISSION

From the Italiensches Liederbuch

Wie soll ich fröhlich sein

How can I be happy and laugh when you rage so undisguisedly? You come but once in every hundred years, and then as though it were an order. Why come if your family resent it? Set my heart free, then you may go your way. At home with your people, live in peace; whatever Heaven decrees will come to pass.

Gesegnet sei das Grün

Blessed be green and those who wear it! I shall have a green dress made for me. Spring meadows wear a green dress too; the darling of my heart wears green. To dress in green is the huntsman's custom. Green is my lover's habit; green beautifies all things; every lovely fruit has once been green.

Sterb' ich, so hüllt in Blumen meine Glieder

If I die, cover my limbs with flowers; I do not wish you to dig me a grave. Lay me beside that wall where you have so often seen me. There let me lie in rain or wind; I die gladly if it is for you, beloved child.

Und steht Ihr früh am Morgen auf

When you rise early from your bed, you drive the clouds from the heavens. You lure the sun to those hills, and cherubim vie to bring you shoes and raiment. Then when you go to mass, the people are all drawn to go with you and when you approach the blessed shrines the lamps are kindled by your glance. You take holy water, make the sign of the cross, moisten your white brow, and make obeisance, and bend your knees. Oh, how radiantly it becomes you! Grace and blessedness are your gifts from God, you who have received the crown of beauty.

Benedeit die sel'ge Mutter

Blessed be the happy mother who bore you. Your rare beauty awakens my longing. You, so lovely in movement, loveliest on earth! You my jewel, my joy, sweetest, most blest. When I yearn from afar and contemplate your loveliness, see how I tremble and sigh: I can scarcely conceal it. In my breast I feel mighty flames rising, destroying my peace. Ah, madness seizes me! Blessed be the happy mother, etc.

Wenn du mich mit den Augen streifst

When you caress me with your eyes and laugh and drop and bow your

chin towards your breast, I beg you to give me a warning, so that I may tame my heart when it would leap for overpowering love; so that I may keep my heart within me breast, when it would break out with great joy.

Wie viele Zeit verlor ich

How much time I have lost in loving you! If I had loved God all that time, a place in paradise would have been reserved for me, a saint by my side. But because I have loved you, lovely youthful face, I have thrown away the light of paradise; because it is you I have loved, little flower, I shall not come into paradise.

Wenn du, mein Liebster, steigst zum Himmel auf

When you, my beloved, rise to heaven, I will come to you with my heart in my hand. You will embrace me lovingly and we will prostrate ourselves before our Lord. And when the Lord sees the anguish of our love, He will make one heart of our two loving hearts. He will fuse our two hearts into one in paradise, girt with divine light.

O wär' dein Haus durchsichtig wie ein Glas

Oh if your house were transparent as glass, my dear, when I steal by, I could always see you; how I would gaze at you with my whole soul! How many glances would my heart send--more than the drops in the rivers of March!--more than all the drops of rain!

Heut Nacht erhob ich mich um Mitternacht

Last night I rose at midnight and found my heart had crept secretly away from me. I asked, "Heart, where are you going so violently?" It said it had gone only to see you. Now see how I love you: my heart forsakes my breast to see you.

Schweig' einmal still

Be quiet, you wretched babbler! Your damned singing makes me sick! If you keep on trying till morning you will not produce a decent song. Be quiet! Go to sleep. I'd rather hear a donkey's serenade.

Ich hab' in Penna einen Liebsten wohnen

I have a lover living in Penna, another in the Maremma plain, one in Ancona's lovely harbour, for the fourth I have to go to Viterbo, another lives in Casentino, the next lives in my village, I've yet another in Magione, four in La Fratta, and ten in Castiglione.

INTERMISSION

Der Musikant (Eichendorff)

I love a life of roaming, just living as I can. Even if I took the trouble to work, it wouldn't suit me. My songs are old and lovely; out in the cold, barefoot, I pluck my strings, and never know where I'll sleep at night! Many a pretty girl makes eyes at me, thinking I might please her, if only I chose to make something of myself and wasn't such a poor rascal. May God give you a husband and provide a house and home! If we two were together, perhaps I'd sing no more.

Anakreons Grab (Goethe)

Here where roses bloom and vines cling to the laurels, where turtle-doves call, and the little cricket plays--whose grave is this, so beautifully adorned with life by the gods? It is Anacreon's resting place. Spring, summer, and autumn delighted this most favoured of poets, until this hillock finally gave him shelter from winter.

Über Nacht (Sturm)

At night, grief steals in silently, and if you wake, Oh my sorrow, you will greet the dawn with weeping. At night, joy steals in silently, and if you wake, Oh my blessed destiny, melancholy dreams are banished and joy triumphs. At night, joy and sorrow both steal in, and in no time at all, they both leave you, and go to the Lord, telling Him how you have borne them.

Der Tambour (Mörike)

If only my mother were a witch, then she could go everywhere in France with my regiment, and look after the food. In the camp at midnight, when no one but the watch was about, and all the horses and men were snoring, I'd sit in front of my drum, as if it were a bowl full of sauerkraut. I'd use my drum sticks as knife and fork, and my sabre could be a sausage. My cap would make a fine tankard that I'd fill with blood-red burgundy. And as there'd be no light, the moon would shine into my tent in French style, and I'd think of my sweetheart. Oh dear, now the fun is over! If only my mother were a witch!

Um Mitternacht (Mörike)

The night rose calmly over the land, and now leans dreaming on the mountainside. She sees the golden scales of Time quietly at rest in equal measure. And the springs gush boldly forth and sing to the night, their mother, of the day, the day that is gone. She

pays no heed to the age-old lullaby; she is weary of it. To her the dark blue of the sky, and the balanced yoke of the fleeting hours hold greater charms. But the springs murmur on.

Im Frdhling (Mörike)

I lie here on this hill in springtime; clouds are my wings, a bird flies on before me. Oh tell me, my one and only love, where you are. You, like the breezes, have no home. My heart is open like a sunflower, yearning, stretching out in love and hope. I see the drifting clouds and the river. My eyes, wondrously enchanted, feign sleep, and my ear hearkens to the sound of bees. I think of this and that, and am filled with longing, I hardly know for what; half is joy, and half lament. Oh my heart, tell me what memories you weave in the twilight of green branches? Ineffable days of old!

Auf einer Wanderung (Mörike)

I came into a friendly town; the streets glowed with evening light. From an open window I heard a sound floating like golden bells. The voice was like a choir of nightingales, and it made the blossoms tremble, the breezes stir, and the roses shine more brightly. I stood there entranced. How I found my way through the gateway I cannot say. Ah, here lies the world, so bright; the skies bathed in crimson, and behind me the town in a golden haze. How the stream rushes past the alders by the mill! I am confused, intoxicated. Oh Muse, you have touched my heart with a breath of love!

Abschied (Mörike)

One evening, unannounced, a gentleman steps into my room. "I have the honour to be your critic, sir!" At once he takes the candlestick, and, moving to and fro, carefully examines my shadow on the wall. "Now, my dear young man, just take one look at your nose from the side, if you please! You must admit, it's grotesque!" "Indeed? Good heavens--so it is! Never in all my days did I realize I had such a distinguished nose!" The man went on to speak of this and that--for the life of me I can't remember what. Perhaps he meant me to make some sort of confession? At last he stood up, and I lit the way for him. Then, as we reach the stairs, I give him, quite amiably, just a gentle kick from behind. By thunder! What a rumbling, a somersaulting and a tumbling there was! In all my days I've never seen the like.

The concerts in the Great Singers Series will be broadcast on the program "In Concert" at 11 a.m. on CBC Stereo on the following dates:

Maureen Forrester with Thomas Muraco, June 7, 1981

Lois Marshall with Greta Kraus, June 14, 1981

Elisabeth Söderström with William Aide, June 21, 1981

This series has been produced for CBC by Srul Irving Glick, with technician David Burnham.

Next Concert: University of Toronto Jazz Ensemble,
Saturday, March 21, 1981, 8 p.m.
MacMillan Theatre